

May 19, 2000 - Minutes

Department of Technology Planning

Virginia Geographic Information Network

Virginia Geographic Information Network Advisory Board

Virginia Department of Transportation

Board Room, 3rd floor of the Annex Building

1401 E. Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia

Members Present:	Honorable John Watkins, <i>Chairman</i>
	Daniel S. Shaffer, <i>Vice Chairman</i>
	Honorable Mary Margaret Whipple
	Ken Anderson
	Kenneth D. Barker
	Jerry Simonoff
Designee:	Dan Widner for Pete Kolakowski
	Jean Tingler for Mark Kilduff
Members Absent:	Honorable Watkins M. Abbitt, Jr.
	William C. Cleveland
	Michael D. Clower
	W. Page Cockrell
	Dr. W. Mark Crain
	Mark R. Kilduff
	Pete Kolakowski
VGIN Staff:	William D. Shinar, VGIN Division Coordinator
	Bob Rike, VGIN Division Assistant Coordinator

	John McGee, VGIN Division Assistant Coordinator
	Matt Blaes, VGIN Division Assistant Coordinator

The Virginia Geographic Information Network (VGIN) Advisory Board meeting was called to order at 2:00 P.M. by the Honorable John Watkins, *Chairman*. Senator John Watkins welcomed the group, and introduced Mr. Don Upson, the Secretary of Technology.

Secretary Upson lamented that VGIN's initiatives were not passed in the 2000 legislative session due to some misinformation, and a good deal of misunderstanding. Secretary Upson stated that the Governor will soon announce the most significant initiative for E-government ever, that will include provisions for:

- Digital signatures;
- A 12 month period for State government to support many of its requirements electronically, including:
 - Leave
 - Travel
 - Procurement, and
 - Expenses.

Mr. Upson stated that GIS may also be included as a component in this package.

Secretary Upson stated that one of the largest obstacles to E-government is that the component parts do not think like a whole. Secretary Upson stated that things must be done deliberately, not in a piecemeal method, and stressed that the Commonwealth has established itself through a team effort, and that Virginia must continue to build its technical capabilities through consensus building.

Secretary Upson further maintained that: "GIS is the most powerful component of technology today....it is one of the most exciting uses of information and technology...adding a spatial component."

Mr. Anderson asked about the role of the private sector. Mr. Upson responded that the private sector continues to play a very important role in the support of the education, dissemination, and development of GIS products and services and supporting the Commonwealth's efforts to coordinate and establish an efficient information infrastructure.

Upon completion of his comments and some questions, Secretary Upson adjourned from the meeting.

Business

Because a quorum was not present at the May 19 VGIN Board Meeting the draft minutes of the December 7, 1999 VGIN Advisory Board meeting were reviewed. These minutes were approved as amended at of February 2nd meeting.

The minutes of the February 2nd meeting were then reviewed. Mr. Anderson brought it to the attention of the board that an “of” was missing on page 3 (last sentence of the paragraph). Mr. Shaffer pointed out that his name had been spelled incorrectly. Ms. Tingler mentioned that the discussion of legislation on Page 7 should be corrected. “South Carolina” should be substituted for “North Carolina”.

The minutes for the February 2, 2000 meeting were accepted as corrected.

Due to the failure of a quorum at the previous VGIN meeting, the February minutes were approved.

VGIN Coordinator’s Report

Legislation:

Mr. Shinar stated that VGIN remained optimistic about the legislative initiatives that were discussed at the February 02nd meeting. However, Mr. Shinar stated that it he is concerned that there was a significant degree of misinformation that was disseminated regarding the digital ortho project. Mr. Shinar also stated that the Governor’s budget was not release until December 19 and VGIN was unable to publicly voice support for the initiatives until after that time. Therefore, due to time constraints, VGIN was unable to provide the education necessary for the initiatives to be fully understood by the general assembly.

Mr. Anderson asked what the real problem was, and who, if anyone, was responsible.

Mr. Shinar responded that the finance committee staff did not meet with VGIN staff or even direct questions to the VGIN staff. Unfortunately, the finance committee staff went to other individuals to collect their information, and came away believing 1 meter satellite imagery would be sufficient for all GIS applications in the Commonwealth.

Mr. Anderson asked if Henrico, Fairfax, etc. (other counties that already have digital orthophotos) would continue to object to these programs. Mr. Shinar responded that he believed that these counties (Henrico and Fairfax) were supportive of the digital ortho initiative all along. Mr. Shinar mentioned that Senator Trumbo’s legislative district was mapped according to data availability. This map illustrated how his district was a quilt of data, not a blanket

and is. This was a powerful demonstration of the argument for a consistent foundation for spatial data initiatives.

Mr. Shinar concluded his discussion on the digital ortho project, by stating that VGIN will continue to push ahead with the Digital Ortho program, as long as the constituents of Virginia support this initiative.

Mr. Shaffer expressed a need to promote policies and standards. Mr. Shinar maintained that the generation of policies and standards must be a stakeholder driven process. Mr. Shaffer responded that there is a time factor. He suggested that moving quickly is in the best interest of the Commonwealth. He further maintained that as a private business owner, he has to do what he needs to do. Mr. Shaffer stated that he has been on the VGIN Board for 3 years, and he does not feel as though progress has been made during this time. Mr. Shaffer maintained that Virginia needs a clearinghouse, and that Virginia needs to set standards. Mr. Shinar also indicated that VGIN is moving to implement a clearinghouse which would be discussed later in the meeting and that the Digital Orthophotography program would do more to set consistent standards, Commonwealth-wide than any other possible initiative.

Mr. Shinar further stated that it is important that VGIN develop standards through a stakeholder driven process. Mr. Shinar reiterated that VGIN was working diligently through workgroups, presentations, personal contacts, and meetings to help GIS technology stakeholders prioritize areas of need for standards and guidelines.

Mr. Shinar maintained that VGIN continues to receive a very positive response and support for both our legislative initiatives. VGIN is continuing to work with VAMLIS, VML, and the VAPDC and with our local constituencies.

State Government and Higher Education:

CAP2000 Grant

Mr. Shinar stated that VGIN applied for an FGDC CAP2000 grant. This is a matching grant, that could potentially provide VGIN with \$50,000 to support 40 regional forums across the Commonwealth of Virginia focusing on the National Spatial Data Infrastructure and Framework Data. Mr. Shinar pointed out that the digital ortho program supplements this process, because the DO program does more to support the creation of Framework data than anything else. VAMLIS, VML, VACO and VAPDC are partnering in this grant proposal with VGIN.

The Digital Ortho Study

VGIN has also been talking with several vendors about doing research on Digital Orthos and comparing DO's to other spatial imagery. VGIN has approached ASI,

Earth Data, and VARGIS to participate and to design a methodology for the project. Selected local governments officials will also be involved in the study.

Mr. Shaffer asked why only one Virginia firm and two outside firms were being included in the study and maintained that ASI's business record in Virginia is suspect. Mr. Shinar stated that these firms are volunteering their time, and that the study is not a sales pitch for the companies. VGIN is merely trying to take advantage of their expertise. Mr. Shaffer indicated that there is a considerable amount of expertise on the VGIN Advisory Board and suggested that this expertise be utilized. Mr. Shinar said that he would be happy to take Mr. Shaffer's comments under advisement consideration and would be glad to review the proposed study partners further.

Mr. Shaffer responded that he wants to have a more active role in VGIN.

Mr. Shinar responded that VGIN would like to encourage individual participation in the Board, and is promoting a move towards Ad Hoc committees. This issue will be addressed later in the meeting. Bill also mentioned that Mr. Shaffer has been invited to participate in a State Users Group Meeting, along with selected other private sector representatives, and that he is open to ideas to encourage the active roles of Board members.

Mr. Anderson responded that he is glad that VGIN is taking advantage of the private sector.

The Distributed Spatial Data Library Initiative

VGIN is currently looking at the Distributed Spatial Data Library Initiative, and is carefully exploring the decentralized distribution of data. In March, VGIN held a Distributed Spatial Technology Workshop that was attended by approximately 100 individuals from the local, regional, state levels of government, as well as the private sector. In preparation for this Forum, 16 organizations from across the United States were extensively interviewed on the phone. Of these 16 organizations, 8 were identified as being highly competent candidates to participate in the forum. From this short list, 6 organizations participated in the Workshop. VGIN provided each presenter with a structured outline for the presentations, to make the presentations comparable with each other. All of the PowerPoint presentations are now available on VGIN's Web Site. This was an extremely successful Forum, and VGIN has received tremendous feedback from both the private and public sectors.

SDE was the focus of the forum. This was not an endorsement of SDE or ESRI but only an attempt to fully understand one "class" of software before comparing it to others. The analogy is to understand how one bicycle works before comparing the capabilities of several bicycles.

Following the forum a meeting of the Technology Work Group was held where participants in the Forum joined work group members for the meeting. The discussion focused on the feasibility of implementing the Distributed Spatial Data Library. The group concluded that while seamless access to data (high performance, low impact) is possible it represents a significant investment in hardware and software and networking capabilities. Due to the expense the group discussed alternatives. The conclusion of the group was that a one stop clearinghouse for "framework" data should be implemented by VGIN working with partners throughout the Commonwealth.

Framework Data Clearinghouse

Mr. Shinar stated that VGIN is in the process of developing a Framework Data Clearinghouse to support the data acquisition needs of the GIS community in the Commonwealth. Mr. Shinar went on to explain that Framework Data is associated with data themes that are developed, maintained, and integrated by public and private organizations and are associated with a geographic area. The clearinghouse will provide a vehicle for public and private organizations to share resources and increase efficiency. Themes often associated with framework data include base data that can be applied to a variety of applications. These basedata may include:

- geodetic control,
- orthoimagery/DOQQ's,
- elevation,
- transportation,
- hydrography,
- governmental units.

Mr. Anderson asked when the DOQQ's would be available for the Western part of the Commonwealth, and inquired if there was anything that VGIN could do to ensure that the USGS would complete DOQQ's for this region.

Ms. Tingler responded that the USGS expects to release this data during the Summer of 2000.

Hydrography Project

Mr. Shinar said that VGIN is still working on a cooperative agreement with the North Carolina Center for Geographic Information and Analysis and the USGS to generate 1:24,000 hydrology quads for the southern section of the Commonwealth that drain into North Carolina. This will include approximately 164 quadrangles.

SOTECH GIS

VGIN is working on the development and implementation of a GIS for the Secretary of Technology (i.e., the SOTECH GIS). VGIN is currently in the process of implementing a GIS for SOTECH. VGIN has purchased and acquired CITRIX. One exciting thing is that VGIN can support SOTECH and provide initial support to agencies with and emerging GIS, who want to “get their feet wet” and experiment with GIS and its capabilities. VGIN is making available an option for these agencies to hit on the SOTECH database, and use GIS tools from their desktops. Mr. Shinar speculated that the GIS industry is on the verge of a revolution, with CITRIX type technology providing unprecedented support for startup opportunities, and by providing a new mechanism for serving applications. Once the CITRIX server is running, the only investment that is required to distribute a GIS with good performance is hardware and a modem. This product can easily allow GIS to be presented to executives in their own offices.

Web Page Development

Mr. Shinar stated that VGIN is in a constant process of developing and updating its Web Pages. Mr. Shinar further stated that VGIN has worked extensively to contact local communities and cities, and identify the appropriate points of contact for GIS. This information will be available on the Web. Some of the localities expressed a desire not to have their contacts published. Obviously, VGIN has respected these requests, and offered alternatives to these communities, which included giving either the local PDC or VGIN itself as the contact.

VGIN has posted information on each State Agency's GIS under the GIS Resources section of the Web page. also created and published an “information index card” for state agencies. At the present, VGIN has “information index cards” from approximately 10 state agencies completed. These have been posted to the Web. VGIN will continue to acquire, format, and post the information from the remaining agencies.

The next step is to complete the information for private companies and utilities.

In addition, VGIN has also begun listing GIS articles geared towards local government on the Web. Currently VGIN has 39 articles posted on its Web Site, which discuss how GIS can support local government applications. These articles are reviewed and screened, and are generally not too technical in nature. We have collected publishing rights to all of these documents, and have formatted them appropriately, so that they will be easy to read on smaller monitors. VGIN is in the process of reviewing RFP's and other formal documents to support communities. Mr. Shaffer mentioned that it would be helpful to include a search engine to support the information on this page.

MetaData Clearinghouse

Mr. Shinar stated that VGIN is in the process of implementing an FGDC compliant metadata clearinghouse for state agencies. Currently, there will be two avenues for agencies to provide FGDC metadata. Organizations can either provide “full-blown” FGDC compliant metadata, or they can provide an FGDC compliant “VA metadata lite”. Both procedures are web-enabled. Agencies will be able to provide and maintain their metadata through the web. The “VA metadata lite” includes approximately 40 elements that were identified by the Metadata Workgroup. These elements have been reviewed by state agencies and organizations. The goal of the metadata lite is to give agencies the opportunity to begin documentation of their spatial data at a lower cost. The process of implementation will be designed to be low impact. Each agency will be asked to provide one form or other of the metadata for probably just 3 layers of data initially. As any kinks in the system are worked out agencies will be asked to document all their vital spatial data assets.

SOTECH (Secretary of Technology) Customer Summit

VGIN supported the SOTECH Customer Summit, by holding a breakout session and demos. Six agencies provided live demonstrations of some of their GIS capabilities. Agencies that supported the SOTECH Customer Summit included:

- The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
- The Department of Forestry
- The Department of Transportation
- The Department of Environmental Quality
- The Department of Conservation and Recreation
- The Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department

VGIN developed and designed posters that showed how data was shared across several agencies. For example, VDOT’s road file was well utilized in almost all applications at the SOTECH customer summit.

The Academic Forum

Next Monday and Tuesday (May 22nd-23rd) VGIN is hosting an academic forum at the Roslyn Center for approximately 32 professors and staff from across the Commonwealth. The idea of the Academic Forum is to explore opportunities to leverage resources and to develop cooperative agreements. In addition, Ivan Somers from CIT will lead a round table discussion on the Virtual Center. The Virtual Center is an initiative that is currently being spearheaded by CIT in an effort to better market the Commonwealth’s research expertise, particularly in remote sensing. VGIN will also be discussing other issues, including software procurement issues impacting the Commonwealth.

Mr. Shinar reminded the Board that VGIN is sponsoring a reception on Monday night (May 22nd). Board members have been invited to attend. It will be held at the Richbrau Haus in Shockoe Slip at 5:30.

Procurement

VGIN staff met with procurement officers at DIT's Acquisition Services Division to discuss state government procurement procedures. The Secretary of Technologies Council on Technology Services (COTS) is responsible for evaluating technology procurement procedures and priorities. Meeting with COTS executive director VGIN was able to submit information that got GIS in the "first tier" of priorities for developing a statewide contract.

Mr. Anderson asked if local communities included under this procurement umbrella.

Mr. Shinar responded that they would be, but there were several options or avenues that the procurement process could follow which would have to be worked out when the time came..

Standards

We have conducted an analysis to determine what GIS standards other states have established. We have found that Virginia is not as far behind as we think we are in respect to setting statewide standards. Mr. Shinar reiterated that as Mr. Shaffer had pointed out earlier, this is an important topic, and we intend to continue to work on establishing statewide standards. Mr. Shinar again pointed out that the Digital Ortho project will do more to establish standards in Virginia than any other procedure.

Meetings

VGIN has attended most of the regional and local User Group Meetings. Mr. Shinar gave the keynote address at the Virginia Tech Research and Mapping Symposium, and attended meetings in North Carolina at the Center for Geographic Information and Analysis.

VGIN staff are also meeting regularly with State constituents including the SCC, DES, and other State Agencies.

VGIN will speaking to the Crime Commission in June, attending the ESRI User Conference the last week of June, and is hoping to put together a Web-enabling State GIS Users Group Meeting, that will include several private vendors from across the Commonwealth.

Survey Regulation and Registration

As the preliminary regulation currently stands, the act of creating photogrammetric products will only be affected by this legislation. VGIN continues to follow the progress of the Surveyors legislative committee. When the final draft is presented VGIN will make final comment and recommendations.

NEW BUSINESS

Senator Watkins:

Issue #1-Board Membership. Senator Watkins said that the Board is currently looking for replacements for a representative from the PDC's, two Delegate positions, and one private sector position.

Issue #2-Senator Watkins recommend that the standing subcommittees be abolished due to a lack of participation or difficulty in realizing a quorum for meetings. These subcommittees have been unable ineffective, due to the difficulty in obtaining a quorum. Mr. Watkins proposed that the Board develop ad hoc committees to review specific topics that the staff have put together on certain issues, like digital ortho standards or projection issues. Hearing no objections, the Board agreed to end the two standing committees, Policy & Standards and Planning, and created an ad hoc committee to review the proposed Metadata standard. Ms Tingler, Mr. Anderson, and Mr. Shaffer volunteered for the committee and were given that assignment..

There was a discussion about what constitutes a public meeting.

The Board decided that VGIN will provide staff support for the ad hoc committees, and will also advertise these ad hoc committee meetings.

The Board voted to end the two standing committees, Policy and Standards and Planning. The Board then created an ad hoc committee to review the proposed Metadata standard. Ms Tingler, Mr. Anderson, and Mr. Shaffer volunteered for the committee and were given that assignment.

It was proposed that on June 1st the metadata standards committee could meet at the VAMLIS meeting. Mr. Anderson, Mr. Shaffer, and Ms. Tingler would be attending the VAMLIS meeting.

Other potential Committees where briefly discussed:

Procurement ad hoc Committee

Cost recovery ad hoc Committee

Ms. Tingler requested to be on the Cost Recovery Committee.

Issue #3-Out of the discussion on ad hoc committees, some issues associated with cost recovery came up. Senator Watkins indicated that he was interested in this issue, and was a member of the Competitive Council. Mr. Shinar mentioned that Boomershire from the competitiveness council expressed an interest in helping with the DO program.

Issue #4-Mr. Anderson expressed some concern with DO program. He was concerned that depending on how the project was approached that only a few select firms would be large enough to bid on it. Mr. Shinar responded that no decision had been made on this matter, and that every effort would be made to ensure that Virginia firms would benefit from this project. Mr. Shinar responded that there is funding budgeted in the project to help VGIN and the board determine how to best acquire the data efficiently, cost effectively, and to the full advantage of the Commonwealth. Mr. Shinar also indicated that the DO was just a foundation for a great deal of planimetric and parcel based mapping that would need to take place in order for communities to have working systems. Mr. Anderson indicated that he was continuing to look at a grant program, and would continue to examine this issue.

Mr. Shaffer brought it to the attention of the board that the VAMLIS meeting is scheduled for June 01 at the Doubletree in Charlottesville.

BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

The next meeting of the Advisory Board was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday August 29th at 2:00 p.m. in the Richmond Plaza Building (DTP/DIT) Richmond, VA.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Shinar

William D.

VGIN Division Coordinator

Log of Attendees

Melanie Siegler	VDOT
Alan Grafton	EarthData